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How One Man Changed The World

Ferdinand Q. Blanchard

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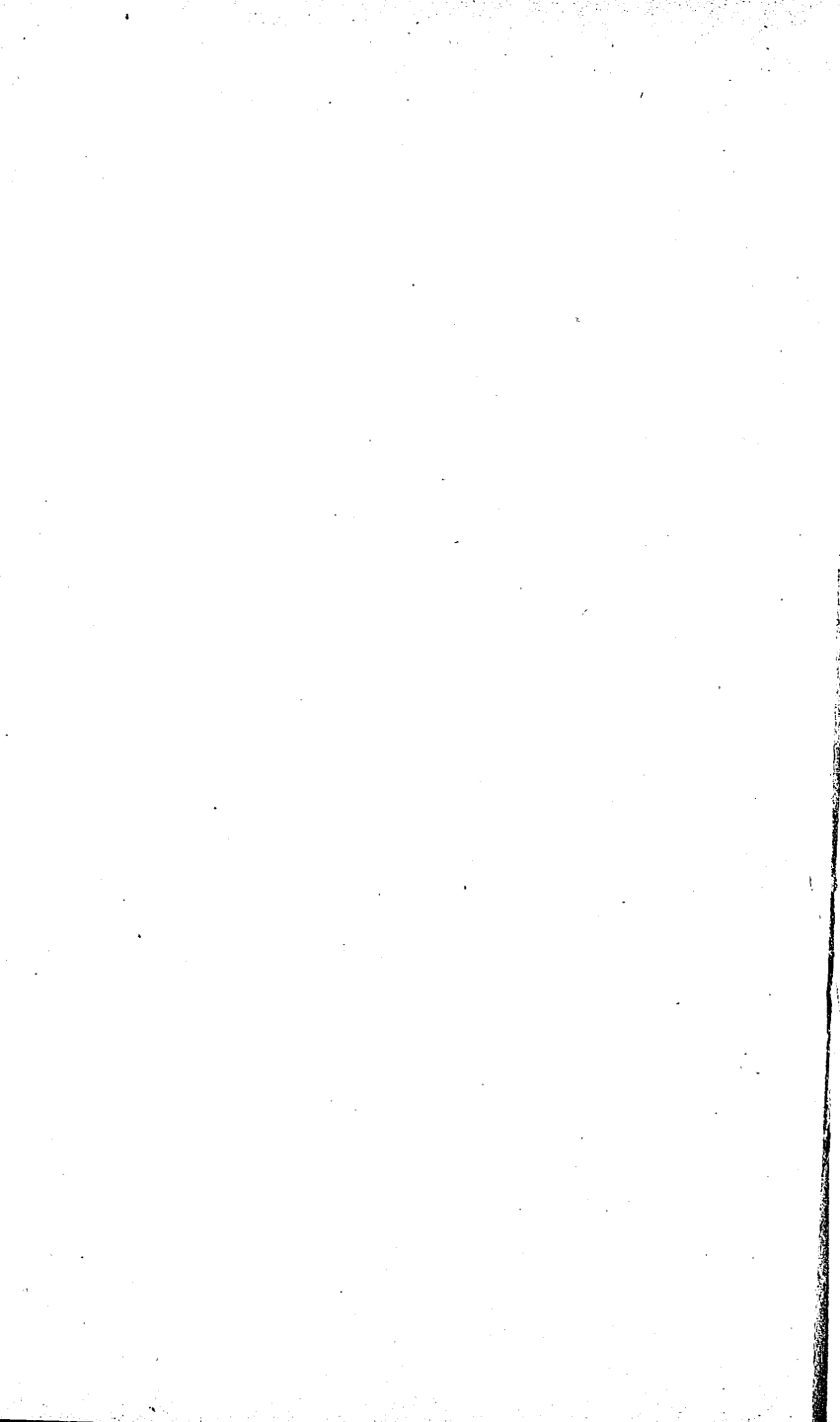
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*How One Man Changed
The World*

HOW ONE MAN CHANGED THE WORLD

A Story
Told for Boys and Girls

BY
FERDINAND Q. BLANCHARD

THE PILGRIM PRESS
BOSTON CHICAGO

BS2421
Z7B6

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TO
VIRGINIA
FOR WHOM THIS WAS WRITTEN
THAT SHE MIGHT KNOW AND UNDERSTAND

P R E F A C E

The contents of this little book were first prepared to tell one little girl the most important story in the world. I hope other children may discover in it the interest she did. But from time to time some older people may turn its pages. For them this preface is written.

There will be those who will protest at once that some most important things are left unsaid in the narrative which follows. The charge is freely admitted. It was no part of my purpose to teach any of the doctrines the Christian Church has developed regarding Jesus. I have had in mind a much simpler, but, as I see it, an equally important task. Jesus appeared to his generation as a young man within the normal framework of human life of that day. When his followers meditated afterwards upon what he had been and done, they were led to certain conclusions concerning him. How far they were correct in their thinking is one of the central questions of the Christian world today. But whatever

one decides, there is surely gain in knowing the facts of the life in the simple form in which they made their appeal.

It was because I found children likely to begin speaking of Jesus with some theological statement which they had been taught, but whose meaning they did not at all grasp, and because their knowledge seemed too often to end with this same inadequately understood statement, that I have desired to make him seem as real a personality as Abraham Lincoln, or as Jesus himself seems when one walks over the very hills he climbed and stands by the lake beside which he spoke his truth.

I would not claim that I am doing what no one has ever done before. Many books have set forth with picturesque detail the customs of his day and the sort of country in which he lived. But, so far as I happen to know, the *Lives of Christ* which do this fall into one of two groups. Those of one sort, which raise none or few of the critical questions centering about the New Testament narratives, permit the beliefs of a later time deeply to color the picture. Those of another sort present not the story of a life but essentially a discussion of the questions raised by Jesus' career and

character and the existing records. A simple narrative, as Farrar, for example, set it down, but told with full recognition of the conclusions of modern scholarship, I have not personally seen.

To tell the story thus, and so that a child might understand it was my aim. How far the end has been attained, it is for those who read what follows to say.

I am indebted to my friend, the Reverend Charles Campbell, a companion in a visit to Palestine, for permission to use photographs which he took on that occasion as the basis of the illustrations in the book.

I would also express my appreciation to my assistant in my church, Miss Louise Harper, for carefully reading the manuscript and suggesting certain changes to make the story clearer for the children.

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How One Man Changed The World

CHAPTER I

THE HOME AT NAZARETH

IF you should go aboard a modern steamship in the harbor of New York and travel for a week across the Atlantic Ocean, you could finally sail between two points of land, one in Europe and one in Africa, and come into the Mediterranean Sea. Then for at least five days more you could travel still farther east over its blue waters, until at last you would come in sight of a long stretch of hills running from north to south. The country towards which you were drawing near would strike you as a land of hills, climbing up and up towards the sky.

It is not a very big land. From north or south its length is not over one hundred and fifty miles. From the shore of the Mediterranean going straight east, you could easily

ride across it during one afternoon in an automobile. This distance is about fifty miles. There is only one large city. The towns are a good way apart. There is but one river and that, the Jordan, bounds the land on the east. Much of the year the country looks bare and brown because there is little rain. But the land draws people to visit it from every corner of the earth, because *there* was born the man whose life has been of more importance to our lives than that of any other man who ever lived.

His father's name was Joseph and his mother's name was Mary. They lived in a town up among some great hills in the northern part of Palestine. It has been thought that their little boy was born in a small city called Bethlehem, some seventy miles away towards the south, where they had gone on a journey. We do not know surely about this. Nobody thought when he was a boy that he was going to be so famous when he grew up, and his parents were poor people whose doings were not especially noticed by others. After he became very well known, all sorts of stories were told—some of them very beautiful stories about angels and wise, rich men who came to

see him. But these stories only help us to see how much people had grown to love him. We only know that whether or not he was actually born in Nazareth, that is the place where his parents lived and that is where he grew up as a boy. He was named Jesus. People then had but one name usually.

Nazareth was a town in a beautiful location. One has but to walk a little way beyond its buildings to have a view over far reaches of level plain and low hills and high mountains. When as a boy Jesus climbed the hill behind the village, he would see just below where he stood a wide green stretch of country across which, like a waving line of brown, stretched a road. On this road he would see merchants and soldiers, camels and horses, wagons and chariots, people on pleasure and others on business, going and coming from early morning until the shadows fell over the hills and Nazareth people lighted their lamps and began to think of going to bed.

There is a story that once he went to Jerusalem, a long, long journey on foot it was, for a great celebration. There he became so interested in what was going on and in talking with people in the great church called the Temple,

that his father and mother lost him in the crowd. Thinking that he must be with some of their neighbors, they started home without him and then had to go back and search for him. You may be sure they were glad to find him safe and sound.

After a while other children came into the home. There were four brothers and two sisters. As their house was a small one, we can be sure it was a busy, merry place with nine people in it. The children went to school where they learned to read and write. But most of all they studied what we call the Old Testament. This was the history of their land and full of many things their famous men had said. So it was a very important book to know. Every boy, at least, had to study it hard and long.

When school was over they played games in the streets, or climbed over the hill on whose side the town was built, and very certainly they took turns helping their mother bring home water from the spring whence all their supply came. Sometimes, too, their father wanted their help, and they learned something of his trade as a builder of houses and a maker of all sorts of things from wood.

One sad day Joseph died. He left his family his good name and he left to his oldest boy, Jesus, the task of carrying on the business and earning money for their support. Thus for many years Jesus worked through long days building and repairing houses in Nazareth. He was trusted by his friends and neighbors, and we may be sure he did good work. He seldom went away from home except when he went to Jerusalem for the great feast of the Passover, as I told you he did at least once as a boy. But finally came a time when he said goodbye to his old home forever. How he came to do this we must now discover.



CHAPTER II

A VISIT TO A STRANGE MAN AND WHAT CAME OF IT

THE river Jordan is the east boundary of Palestine. It starts its journey among mountains, but it drops down lower and lower on its way through a deep gorge until it is many, many feet lower than the coast and sea. The country along its banks has no homes upon it and no crops are raised there. It is just bleak bare land except where, close to the water, green grass and rushes grow. And yet it is not very far distant from Jerusalem and smaller towns situated in fertile country.

One day when Jesus had grown to be a young man thirty years old, there suddenly appeared by the bank of the river a very strange-looking man. He had lived by himself without shelter, getting his food as he could from the wild fruits of the hills, and dressing in poor rough clothes made from the skins of camels. But he could speak so inter-

estingly that the few people he first met soon grew into great crowds that wanted to hear him. They called him "John, the Baptizer," because his name was John and because he asked the people who wanted to follow him to be baptized. This was done as a sign that they would try to live good clean lives as he told them to do, so making themselves ready for a new kind of ruler to be sent by God himself to the people.

Far away in his hill town of Nazareth, Jesus heard of this man, of his wonderful speeches and of the crowds of people going to hear him. The time had come when Jesus was able to leave his work and go away from home. His younger brothers had grown up and they could easily care for the family as Jesus had long been doing. So he made up his mind that he would go to see and hear John.

There was another reason. All through these years when Jesus had been living quietly at Nazareth he had been thinking of the way other people lived. He had studied the teaching of the great men who had lived in his country, but he had been thinking things over by himself too. Especially he had thought about God. As the birds circled about in the

sky over his head, as the flowers came out in lovely forms and colors on the hillsides each spring, as he had seen the farmers sow the seed and then months later cut down the waving grain, as the crimson and gold of the sunset sky marked the long day's ending, he had seemed to hear God speaking to him of the goodness and care which surrounded everything. And then God seemed to tell him of the love which in a yet greater way was about children and men and women; so that if any of them asked for help to do the right things day by day, God would give it. Jesus was as sure of all this as he was that Nazareth was built on its great hilltop. He wanted other people to be sure, too.

Then he had been noticing how many times people treated other people unkindly. Rich people thought they were better than poor people. Perhaps because in Jesus' home there was little money, he had known just how unkind this way of acting could be. On the other hand he saw how much every one could do by helping other people to make life more pleasant in Nazareth.

So it was that Jesus decided that he should tell people what he had come to know. Up

to this time he had had no opportunity; but at last, he was free to do so. And the things that John the Baptizer did and said led him, as we shall now see, to begin his own teaching.

From Nazareth Jesus journeyed down on foot to the place in the Jordan valley where John was to be found. Perhaps there went with him some other young men who lived at Capernaum, thirty miles away over the hills and by the Lake of Galilee. If they did not go with him, at least they met him when he reached the end of the journey. It is worth remembering this, for we shall hear about them later.

Jesus listened to John for several days. Then one day John was baptizing some of those who had heard him speak. They wished to show how truly they believed in what he said about right living, how sorry they were for doing wrong things, and how ready they were to prepare for the day when some one from God might come to rule the land. Jesus joined this company and went down into the water of the Jordan to be baptized.

It was while this was occurring that something happened to Jesus which was very important. Later, he told the young men who

became his daily companions about it. He said that it seemed as though God spoke to him, and the words he seemed to hear were, "You are my dear son; I am pleased with what you are doing."

Have you ever done something because you knew you ought to do it, and have you ever "felt right," as we say, after doing it? Your conscience told you that you had done right. Something like that happened to Jesus; only it was an experience much more clear, sure, and definite than comes to us, because the thing Jesus had decided to do was so much more important than what we have to decide to do. Jesus told about this as though people might have seen and heard what went on in his own heart; or perhaps those who wrote about it later told the story in that way. At any rate, that is the way the story stands in the New Testament today. But what it really means is that Jesus knew that the things he had come to believe were indeed right and true, and that his decision to tell other people was the decision God wanted him to make.

CHAPTER III

AN IMPORTANT BATTLE

BETWEEN the Jordan valley, where the people had gathered to hear John, and the city of Jerusalem, lies one of the wildest bits of country upon which the eye of man ever rests. There is not a blade of green grass or a suggestion of human life in the whole region. When one looks over it from the highlands about Jerusalem, it seems like a great ocean of rolling hills and valleys, which even in the bright Syrian sun is so waste and bare as to bring to you a feeling of great loneliness. If Jesus wanted to be alone, as he did, no place in the world would give a better opportunity. He had but to walk a few hours from the people gathered in John's company, to lose himself in this wilderness of rolling country, and there he could be by himself to think about the meaning of the life which he was now going to undertake. Sure that it was his mission to go out and tell the people what he believed about God and their conduct

towards one another, the question he had to decide was how he should do this. There was one way which would naturally make its appeal to Jesus' mind.

The whole country was excited with the idea that a leader was coming to them in some strange, wonderful way, to rule as their King in Jerusalem. Both before and after the time when Jesus lived, men who had summoned the people to follow them, promising release from the rule of the Roman Empire which had conquered the country, always succeeded in getting followers. Even when they were arrested and punished by the Romans, the people admired them. Now if Jesus told the people he was such a leader, he was sure of securing their interest.

On the other hand, there was danger lest the very thing he wanted them to believe would be forgotten as they dreamed and talked of armies and battles and palaces. Still it was the easy way to stir up enthusiasm, and the question would naturally be whether it was not, therefore, the best thing to do at the beginning.

As of his experience in the baptism, so what happened in those lonely days on the desolate

hills could only have been known by what Jesus told at some later time. And like what happened at the Jordan, so in this case the best way he could tell about it was in what we call figurative language. That is to say, he described what was going on in his mind as though it were something that one could have seen had he been there. He told of a kind of contest between himself and a strange, terrible creature called the "Spirit of Evil," or the "Devil." Jesus was very hungry and the creature tells him to turn the stones into bread. Then he seems to take Jesus up to one of the tall towers of the Temple at Jerusalem and he bids Jesus throw himself down, so as to show that God will not let him be hurt. Finally they seem to stand on a high mountain, looking over all the world, and the creature says that Jesus shall be able to rule over everything just by bowing down and worshipping him.

Now we have to ask what these pictures mean, because there was not really any evil creature there with Jesus. They did not go to the Temple. There is no mountain from which one can see more than forty miles of country. It is not very easy for boys and

girls to understand, but unless they do understand it they cannot understand Jesus. Just as you are tempted by bad thoughts, bad desires, so Jesus was tempted. And the bad thing he was tempted to do was to claim to be this sort of a great national hero, unlike all other men, whom God would care for and protect better than he did other men.

Jesus conquered in this battle; that is, he got the better of all these bad desires. He made up his mind he would go about quietly telling people about God and how they might live, and he would not show himself to be different from others, except as he trusted God more fully and did right things every day. This took courage, as we shall see. The other way looked easy. This way Jesus knew would be very, very hard. But in those lonely days in the wilderness he made the great resolve from which he never turned back, even though we shall find it meant pain and hardship and at last death.

CHAPTER IV

A BAD MAN'S EVIL DEED

WHEN Jesus came back from those lonely days in the wild country it was not clear what he should do next. "Why did he not begin speaking to people?" you may ask. Because he did not want to do anything which might hurt John. If he had begun gathering people about him he might have drawn them away from John. Jesus was too kind, too considerate to do that. So he seems to have lived very quietly for a while. It is possible he was in Nazareth going about his work again as a builder. But, alas for John! Jesus did not have very long to wait in this way. There was a bad and cruel prince who ruled over a part of Palestine. John spoke very boldly of the evil things this prince had done. The prince sent some of his soldiers and they arrested John and shut him up in a dungeon in a gloomy castle.

It was dark and damp. No friend was able to help him, for the prince was too strong.

John was kept there for some months. One day at the court of this bad prince there was a party and one of the guests, a young girl, danced. The prince was so pleased that he told her he would give her anything she wanted. This was such a great opportunity to get some wonderful present that the girl, before telling the prince what she wished talked it over with her mother. If one did not know what terrible things people do when they are angry and hate other people, one could not believe it to be true that her mother suggested to her what she did. For the girl went to the prince and asked—what do you suppose?—that John be put to death.

The reason the mother of the girl told her to ask for this was because she hated John. She had married the prince after both she and he had done many bad things. And John had spoken about it publicly. This it was that made her so angry, and her rage was all the greater because she knew he had spoken truly.

The prince, bad man that he was, did not want to do the terrible thing the girl asked him. But he had promised and he made the excuse that he must keep his promise. Of course, one ought to keep a promise, but when

keeping it means to do something thoroughly wrong without any good reason, the law of doing right sets aside the law to keep one's promise. The prince had done wrong in arresting John. He had been foolish in making his promise. Now he added the fearful crime of having John murdered to please his bad wife and foolish daughter. One day in the gloomy castle the brave John was killed. So died the man who had influenced Jesus so much that he will never be forgotten.

I have gone ahead in John's story beyond the point we had reached in telling what Jesus did. John's death did not come immediately after he was shut up in prison. Indeed, he lived long enough for Jesus to become well known and for the news of his deeds and words to reach into the dungeon, making John wonder if Jesus might not be the very one whose coming he had told the people to expect.

When the news reached Jesus that John could not preach any longer but was shut up in the dungeon, he left his home in Nazareth never to return to it except for a visit. He set out across the hill country for a long walk of thirty miles to reach the busy cities which were built on the shores of the Lake of Galilee.

His way led him in and out among the high places of the hill country, by steep paths that tested the strength of every traveler. Finally he came out upon a broad shoulder of the highlands and saw below him the beautiful lake, reflecting the sails of fishing boats. Down to the water at several points ran clustered buildings of little cities, gleaming white. The people looked small indeed from his lofty lookout, but there were, he knew, thousands of them doing business around that quiet sea.

Swiftly the path took him down to the shore. To which of the several cities should he go? He decided upon Capernaum because some young men lived there whom he had met while listening to the preaching of John. Thither he went and passing through the busy streets reached the shore of the lake.

CHAPTER V

JESUS BEGINS TO PREACH

WHEREVER there are many fish in the water and many people on the land, fishing is a business in which many men are engaged. It was this way about the Lake of Galilee. There were no factories in which great machines made goods of all sorts and employed large numbers of people. There were no large stores. Small shops occupied some people and farming others. Different trades supplied what was needed at home and abroad. But there were no more busy, useful workers than the men who sailed out in little boats on the lake with large nets, drew in the fish, and then sold them in the shops near the shore.

Jesus' friends belonged to this group. They were two pairs of brothers. He knew where to look for them. The best fishing was done in the very early morning and now, when the sun was high overhead, the fishermen were busy mending their nets that had been torn

by rocks or in the rough handling of their work. Their little boats had been run upon the sand. We do not know all that was said. Probably they talked over what had happened since they had last met. Then Jesus told them of his plan to go about telling people what he knew of God, and how people should act towards one another. Then he said to them: "Come after me and I will make you fishers of men." He asked them, that is, to give up their work there on the lake and go about with him, his comrades on the journeys they would take.

What did they say? They said they would do as Jesus asked. Of course, there were plans to make with their father so that he would have some one else to help him in his work. We must remember two other things also that will explain why they could decide so quickly. One is that they were not going to leave Capernaum at once. The other is that in that small country of Palestine they would not be going very far away, and they would be returning home from time to time, even after the journeys began. Therefore, it was not necessary to make plans such as would be necessary today if four young men were

suddenly to give up their business and homes and start a new way of life.

The thing that most interests us is that Jesus had so won their admiration and love that whatever might be necessary they were ready to do. They had never met any one so fine and good and splendid as Jesus. In order to help him and to be with him, they were ready to leave all else and follow him.

As Jesus was going to be in Capernaum often, it was necessary to find a place to live. Perhaps he found this at the home of one of these fishermen where he was always a welcome guest. Jesus did not intend to stay for a long while in Capernaum, but it was natural to begin to teach there.

You ask, of course, just what Jesus did and said as he went about his task of making known to people what he had come to know. It was very simple. He would join some group of people, share in their conversation and presently begin to speak of the things he knew to be all important. What he said was so interesting that those who heard him began telling others about it. Very soon, therefore, when he appeared in any group, people who

knew of it made haste to leave whatever else they might be doing and to become listeners. Just the fact that he was likely to speak to them drew ever larger numbers of people to-



gether. Finally it became difficult to find a place where he might speak and be heard by all who desired to listen.

Sometimes he would get into a little boat and push out from the shore just far enough so that people gathered for some distance along the pebbly beach could easily see him. From the boat, as from a platform, with the background of the blue lake and its encircling mountains, he would tell them about themselves and God. At other times he would

leave the city and climb up the slopes of the hills. At some convenient spot with the people seated on the grass all about him, he would speak to them. They never grew weary of hearing him, but as we shall see in a later chapter, sometimes forgot all about going home until they were all "late for supper," as we would say.

How do we know what he said? Nowadays it is possible to take down by what we call "shorthand writing" everything a speaker says. In the days of Jesus this system was not known. Moreover, no one at first supposed that Jesus was going to be the greatest person in history, so nobody tried to keep a record of his words. But he had a way of speaking that made it easy to remember what he had said. Moreover, when there were no newspapers and very few books, people took pains to remember what they heard. And thus it happened that many of the sayings of Jesus were saved.

He did not teach in any set way, taking up one subject after another like lessons in a school book. Ordinarily, he began to speak of something that he had seen or which had occurred recently, and used this to explain the

thing he wanted them to understand. He particularly liked to tell some simple little story which would make clear at once what he wished to say. One day, for example, as he was sitting in a little boat, he saw over the heads of the people on the shore a man walking slowly across a field where the brown soil had been turned by the plow. This man was sowing seed. Perhaps Jesus could see a beaten path at one side of the field and low underbrush along another side. Overhead he could see birds sailing on outstretched wings across the field, now swooping down to the ground, now rising high in the clear bright air.

Of what he saw he made a little story. A man, he said, went out and scattered seed over his field. Some of the seed fell on the beaten path. There the birds saw it and picked it up for food. Other seed fell where weeds and underbrush choked it as it started to grow. Still other seed made a start, but the ground had stones in it and the hot sun withered the seed because it could not send down long roots. But other seed fell where it took root and grew up into a fine field of wheat. And, said Jesus, that is just like what happens to my words. Some people hear and pay no attention.

Some hear and forget. Only a few hear, and then there comes a harvest of good words and deeds. It was easy to remember a story or parable, as we have called it, like that.

When Jesus did not speak in parables he often used short striking sentences that stuck in the memory. He said things like these: "You are the salt of the earth . . . you are the light of the world . . . no man can serve two masters . . . if a man would save his life, let him lose it." Even when it might not be quite easy to understand exactly what he meant, the things he said could not be forgotten. If, therefore, you think of these various things I have spoken of, you can understand how it was possible, years afterward, to set down with a good deal of accuracy the teachings he gave from the little boat or the pleasant hillside or the quiet room of some one's home.

He told people what sort of man one should be in order to bring happiness to others and himself. He should be considerate, sorry for wrong things so that he would wish to right them, unselfish, eager to be good, kind, clean in word and deed, helpful in preventing quarrels, willing to bear hard things in order

to do good. A man such as Jesus would have every one he should do more than he is forced to do. He should be generous as well as just. He should not try to "get even" when someone does him wrong, but should try to return good for evil.

These are only a few of the things Jesus said. You must read all he said for yourself. In the book called the gospel of Matthew you will find several chapters, the fifth, sixth, and seventh, made up of these sayings of Jesus about the "ideal man," that is, the sort we all ought to try to be. These chapters contain also much which he said about God. He is like one's father only much better, wiser and stronger. As the flowers grow in the field, becoming very beautiful, and the birds find food and shelter, so every man and woman, boy and girl, may be sure God's care surrounds each one and that he never forgets or overlooks any one.

CHAPTER VI

JESUS AND THE SICK PEOPLE

IT was by talking to the people about such things as we have just noted that the fame of Jesus went abroad. For so many of the people were poor and sad, so badly treated by the rich and the powerful, that they found comfort and courage in Jesus' words. But something else helped very much to make him known and to bring people to the place where he was. He made sick people well.

In those days there were few doctors, and such as there were knew very little about the cause or the cure of sickness. People had strange ideas of what made any one ill. Nowadays we know that small living things we call "germs" get into the body and cause disease.

Of all that has helped to get rid of much pain and weakness in the world, there was scarcely any knowledge in Jesus' day. People had an idea that evil spirits caused illness. Particularly if anyone had anything the mat-

ter with his brain and acted foolishly or wildly, being either as we now say imbecile or insane, he was said to be possessed by a demon. And these poor unhappy people, being told that some demon was inside of them, came to believe it. Thus the patient and his friends alike shared this wrong but sad and terrible idea.

A wonderful thing it seemed when, in a country where sickness thus meant helplessness and hopelessness, there appeared one with the power to make people well. It is impossible to imagine how it would be if every hospital and doctor we know were taken away. But in part we may feel what this would mean, and then what it would mean if suddenly the news was heard that someone had been found whose touch or word brought back health to sick and suffering people.

And this is what Jesus meant. He made many sick people well. Most interesting, perhaps, and attracting most attention, was the way he gave back to a number of poor sufferers who thought they had demons inside of them the sense of being sane and happy once more. We do not know just how he did it. He used no medicine. It seemed to be the case that there was something about his very

presence that brought peace and strength to the sick. Health was in his touch; calmness in his word. He made men feel that God was loving and caring for them. In that faith they felt tides of healing going through their bodies. They felt as though bad spirits could have no power over them when Jesus bade them be well; for Jesus had in his character stores of strength and peace and courage beyond what other men have had.

Very quickly the news went abroad of those first sick people who were cured. And then from near and far came those who needed the help which they believed Jesus could give. Those who were so ill that they could not get to Capernaum by themselves were helped thither by their friends. Finally, the crowds grew so great that Jesus had to leave Capernaum. He had healed the sick because he was sorry for them. But he did not want it thought that his work was only to make sick bodies well, and he feared that so much notice was being paid to his cures that his teaching would not be heard. For a little while, therefore, he went away into the high country that surrounds the Lake of Galilee and looks down upon the city of Capernaum.

CHAPTER VII

HOW ONE MAN WAS MADE WELL

IT will help us to understand better what we have been thinking about if we recall the story of one afternoon at Capernaum. Jesus had begun to speak to a group of people that had come together in the house where he lived. Others heard about it and came crowding in to listen to him until the rooms were as full as they could be. Then the people pressed about the doorway so that nobody could pass in or out freely.

As Jesus was speaking under these conditions, four men drew near to the house carrying a fifth who was ill. He lay on a mat which the friends carried, one at each corner. They and he were eager to reach Jesus because they had heard of his curing people and they wished to have him make this man, who was paralyzed, well and strong again. To their surprise and dismay they saw they could not get within sight or sound of Jesus. But they were not to be turned back.

In order to understand what they did you must know something about the houses in Palestine. In the first place they were then, as they are now, very low compared with houses in America. They usually had no second story. The roofs were flat, and it was often possible to get up to them by an outside stairway. These roofs were made of light material, perhaps grass plastered with mud to be water-tight, and it was easy to open up a large hole in them at any point.

The four friends clambered up to the roof of the house where Jesus was speaking, lifting up after them their sick friend. Here they set to work and opened a space big enough for them to lower through it the sick man on the mat. In the room below, Jesus and those listening to him would have heard the noise but might not have thought it was due to anything unusual. Suddenly, however, the sun came streaming in through the opening, and a moment later the mat with its load rested in front of Jesus.

He did not need any one to explain matters to him. At once he knew that the man had been brought to be healed, and glancing up he saw the eager faces of the friends peering

down through the hole in the roof. So he stopped short in what he was saying and spoke to the sick man.

"My son," he said, using this kind word to address him, "your sins are forgiven."

That seemed like a strange thing to say. It was not only strange but some people in the house that day thought it was a wrong thing to say. We shall see a little later who these people were. They thought Jesus should not have said what he did because they thought nobody but God could forgive sins. Jesus said it for the reason that he was sure God would forgive. He knew so well what God is like that he could say surely how God felt. And when he saw the way people looked at him in surprise or reproof he hastened to say this:

"Do you think that what I have said is not true? Well, then, in order to show you that God forgives I will show you that God will cure the man." Then he turned to the sick man.

"Get up," he said, "fold up your mat and walk to your home."

And before their eyes, which could hardly believe what they saw, the man did just what Jesus bade him do.

Of course, Jesus did not act or speak like this every time. He knew that this man had done bad things and that he had fallen sick because he had done wrong. He knew also that when the friends tried so very hard to bring him to Jesus, the man must have wanted to come because he was sorry for what he had done. Finally he knew that health for the man's body could not come unless peace came to his heart. The sick man had to be sure that God would forgive him and be his friend before he could feel himself strong and well once more. So Jesus in healing him was able to teach that we can always be sure that God is not our enemy but is like one's father who, when one is sorry for doing wrong, will help one to be good.

CHAPTER VIII

JESUS' FRIENDS AND ENEMIES

JESUS' words and deeds did two things. They made some people ready to follow him anywhere. They made other people dislike him greatly. We can easily see why the first thing happened. We should expect it to be true. Many men and women, the names of some of whom are set down for us in the New Testament, went where he went whenever they could and told others what helpful things he said, what great cures he worked, and what a wonderful man he was.

It seemed well to Jesus to choose out of this large number of friends a small group who could be with him every day. By hearing him speak and seeing what he did, they from time to time could go to towns he could not visit, carry there his words, and act in his name. Then as time went on and Jesus began to fear that the people who did not like him would not let him teach any more, he wanted to

depend upon these special friends of his to carry on what he had begun. We have seen how he had already asked certain young men to be his companions in what he was trying to do. Their names are easy to remember—Peter and Andrew, James and John.

Perhaps none of the larger group except these four were fishermen. One young man was collecting taxes; that is, the money which the Roman people made the Jews pay to them every year. Of the others we know nothing before they joined Jesus. The young tax collector was called Matthew. These are the names of the rest: Philip, Bartholomew, Thomas, Thaddeus, Simon, another James whose father was named Alpheus, and last of all, Judas. Although you may forget many of these, be sure you do not forget that last name, for we shall hear it again.

This group came to be known as "The Twelve." If you counted you know why the name was given. Some of them, the first four especially, were more useful to Jesus than others. But the fact that they all were with Jesus day after day and knew him better than any one else did, made them well known and gave them at last a special place in

people's minds. Many a night they spent with him on the hills, camping out, as we should say today. Many an hour he spent with them alone helping them to see what was true about God and how one person should act towards another. They all loved him at first. All loved him to the end of his short life, except one. The sad story of that one we shall hear later. They often failed to see what he wanted them to understand. They made mistakes. But save that one, Judas, they did the best they could to be his loyal friends.

I said we are not surprised at their action. But why did Jesus have enemies? He was always doing good things. What reason could any one find to dislike him and to do him harm? In order to understand this, you must know a little more about life in Palestine in those days. There was one group of people in particular known as Pharisees. We do not have any group like them in America, or England, or any other modern country. It was somewhat as though one of our political parties, Republicans or Democrats, was combined with one of our church groups. They were patriotic and religious, eager to help their country and to support what was their

church. In many ways, there were no better people in all the land.

But Jesus saw that they were guilty of two great faults. For one thing they looked down upon other people as being not as good as they were. They had a right to think so but not a right to treat other people badly as they seem to have done. In the next place, they had come to the point of thinking that goodness depended on such things as washing at certain times and praying at certain times. Now the things they made so much of were many of them all right. They were intended to help people to be good. But doing them was in itself neither good nor bad. And the Pharisees missed sight of real goodness by talking so much of these ways of being good. In other words, they grew to speak and act as though it were more important to keep one of their customs than to be brave, kind, honorable, and faithful to duty. So Jesus had to point out their mistake and he was disliked by them because he did so. They began to speak disagreeably about him. They tried to turn people against him. They did what they could to hurt and hinder him.

CHAPTER IX

ONE DAY BY THE LAKE

WE have now noted different things about Jesus' life in Galilee — his teachings, his cures of the sick, his friends and his foes. Let us, in this chapter, try to understand how life went on for Jesus from day to day. It may be well to say just here that the stories regarding him which have been saved do not tell us with any sort of exactness how long he lived as a teacher. We know he was about thirty when he began, and there is some reason to think he carried on his work for about three years. Most of that time his home was at Capernaum, and he took short trips among the towns and villages of Galilee. It is quite possible, however, that he did not have so long a time to teach as three years. It may have been less than two. But in any event he spent the greater part of the time in the country near the lake.

At first his efforts met with great success.

Large numbers of people gathered about him wherever he went. Poor crazy men and women were made well in mind; others who had blindness or leprosy or fevers were made well in body. The story of his blessed power was carried to every town and village. Along the roadsides people waited for him to pass that they might see him. One day some women brought him their little children that he might touch them and so bless them. In those days children were not treated so kindly as they are now. Even the young men who made up his group of twelve tried to stop the mothers in what they were doing. It was that day that Jesus made the answer which we always love to remember:

“Let the little children come unto me and forbid them not.” And then the story says, . . . “he took them up in his arms and blessed them.”

Sometimes, again, the plan he had made was suddenly changed by some one's coming to him in great trouble to ask his aid. One day he had been across the lake of Galilee to the eastern shore. Probably it was not for long; perhaps for only one night. But when his little boat again touched the shore near

Capernaum, he found a large number of people waiting for him. They wanted to hear him speak. They never knew what wonderful thing he might do. Hardly, however, had he begun to speak with them when a man who had charge of the synagogue, or the church, as we call it, pushed his way through the crowd and asked Jesus to listen to him.

"My little girl," he said, "is so sick that I fear she may die. No one has been able to help her. Won't you come and see if you can do anything for her?"

Jesus could not refuse this appeal. With a large number of people following him he set out at once on the short walk to the house where the little girl lay sick. On the way there he felt some one give a pull upon his long outer robe. Every man then as now in the land of Palestine wore what we might call a loose cloak with loose sheeves. It was easy to reach out and take hold of this as a person walked past one.

Jesus stopped. "Who touched my clothes?" he asked. One of his band of twelve spoke up at once and said in surprise, "A good many people must have touched you." The streets were narrow. The crowd filled them. Eager

to keep close to Jesus and to see and hear all that might take place, the people pressed close up to him, so that, as the young man said, many persons may have touched him. But Jesus knew that the pull on his robe was not due just to the pushing of the eager people. He looked carefully around on those near enough to have touched him. Almost immediately his eye fell upon a woman, pale and clearly ill. As he looked at her, she came a step nearer.

"It was I, Master," she said.

She did not know what Jesus would say, but she felt that he had discovered at once what she had done. Perhaps she had done wrong, but she could only trust he would not be angry.

"I have been sick for many years," she said to Jesus. "Nearly all the money I had has been spent. None of the doctors has cured me. I heard of you. I thought that if I could only touch you, I might get well."

Very kindly Jesus spoke to her: "I will help you. You may go home sure that you are cured." All this had taken but a few minutes. It was just as Jesus had finished speaking and was about to walk on again that some one else pushed through the crowd.

"It is no use," he broke out. "The little girl is dead."

The father, who all the time had kept by Jesus' side, anxious to guide and hurry him on the way to the house, was in despair. But Jesus comforted him quietly.

"Do not give up hope," he said.

In a few moments he reached the house. At the door he asked all the people to wait. Even of his band of twelve only three went into the house with him. He found the little girl lying so quiet that she seemed, indeed, to be dead. Jesus walked up to the bed, first asking the people in the house who were crying and sobbing to quiet their sorrow. Then he took the small hand that lay so white and cold on the sheet.

"My little girl," he said, "you can get up."

And to the surprise of every one the child did so.

CHAPTER X

A DAY AT NAZARETH

ON another day he set out from Capernaum and walked over the hills to Nazareth. It was a journey which might have taken two days if he did not tarry long anywhere. He may have stopped at some little village over night, or perhaps he lay down to sleep on the hillslopes under the stars. His young men were not with him on this journey. Jesus was glad to be in his own town again. Stories of what he had done had reached Nazareth, and the people were a good deal excited over them. They had long known Jesus as a young man and a good workman who built houses and repaired them. It seemed quite impossible to think of him as a great teacher and a wonderful healer of the sick. They were at once curious and doubtful.

There was a custom in those days for the minister to ask any guest to read the Bible in the church service. On the last day of his

visit, which was the Sabbath, Jesus was invited to do this. He read a part of the writing of the prophet Isaiah. If you would like to know just what he read, turn to that book in your Bible and read the first verses of the sixty-first chapter. Books in those days were in the form of rolls of writing. When he had finished the reading, Jesus handed the roll to the man whose duty it was to see that it was safely put away, and sat down near the pulpit. Then, as was his right, he began to speak about what he had read:

“You wanted to see me do wonderful things here in this town where you all know me. I cannot do them except where people believe in me. Where they do that my words seem true and my deeds great. If you do not think I am able to do the things the prophet wrote about, you will be disappointed in me.”

His words made the people very angry. You see they thought he was just the village carpenter and there was no reason to have respect for what he said. When he seemed to make himself out more important than the rest of the people, they were so angry that they wanted to hurt him. They broke up

the service and pushed and pulled him roughly through the streets.

Nazareth was built upon hills rising steeply from the plain. Beyond the houses of the town you come out upon bare jagged rocks. There are high peaks and deep gullies. One needs to walk carefully to avoid a fall. A man thrown about roughly might easily be injured or even killed. Jesus' peril was great. Every one who might have been his friend was his enemy that day. But Jesus all alone was more than a match for the crowd. We may be sure he did not strike any one of them. To do this would have invited their blows and he might have been killed then and there. Instead he spoke quietly to them. They saw he was not afraid. What he said we do not know, but we do know that the angry, excited mob of people were brought to reason. Seeing him so cool and brave they felt a sort of awe. Then and there they began to wonder if he was indeed a greater one than they had supposed. Steadily he looked first at one, then at another. Those who were holding him loosened their rough grasp. Slowly the crowd slipped back from him. And with that

splendid courage in his look and strong calm in his manner which they had failed to break, but which had broken their purpose, he walked out of the town, out into the hills, to begin his journey back to Capernaum.

Of course, every day was neither so exciting as this nor so full of happenings as was that other day when he healed the little girl who was thought to be dead. Some days he spent in talking quietly with friends or in walking to a town where perhaps lived some man who had heard him at Capernaum or had been healed of disease by Jesus, and who wished Jesus to speak there and become known. Palestine is not a large country, but to visit its towns and villages, walking on foot from place to place and spending even a day or so in each place, would take a long time. However, we are coming near to the end of the story of these days, and we must see what things happened to bring that end about.

CHAPTER XI

A LITTLE BOY AND MANY PEOPLE

IN an earlier chapter of this story we saw that there were certain people in the land who did not like Jesus and who wanted to stop his teaching. As the days went by their feeling against Jesus grew stronger. What finally led to an open break between them and him was their fear that, if they did not stop him at once, he might become too popular to be controlled. The events on a certain day must now be remembered.

Shortly before this, Jesus had sent out his young men, two by two, to go to places he had not been able to visit himself. They had been gone for a few weeks, telling here and there what Jesus had taught them. Very many interesting things had happened, and they were anxious to talk them over with him. On the day when the last of them returned to Capernaum, Jesus suggested that they go away together to a quiet place in the hills where they could be by themselves. They decided

to sail along the shore and find such a spot. It was easy to get a boat. It may have been, indeed, the very one Peter and Andrew had used. They all embarked expecting a restful time alone with Jesus. But it was going to be a different day from what they had expected.

The sailing away of the boat was noticed. There were many people who wished to talk with him. It was thought that he would not go so very far. By hastening on foot along the shore, they could meet the boat as it drew in to the land. So Jesus and his young men found a large number of people waiting for them as they finally dropped their sail and pulled their boat up on the pebbly beach. Jesus could not refuse to speak with them. Going back a little from the shore to a spot where there was some shade from the sun, for it is very hot at midday by the lake, they sat down on the grass. For a long time he talked with them. One thing led to another. The hours slipped by. Finally as there came a pause in the questions and his answers, one of his young men stepped up to him and said, "Master, have you thought that evening is coming on and these people have had nothing

to eat? It is not possible to bring any food out to them. Ought we not to get them started home at once?"

Jesus knew that it was a long walk home. He also thought that some of the people, at least, must have brought some food. So he told his young men to find out about this and to have the people make up into groups of families and neighbors. Soon the word was brought to Jesus that this had been done. Also they told him that there was one little boy who had some bread and fish which his mother had given him for a picnic lunch. Jesus asked the little boy if he would share this with others. Very gladly he offered to do this, proud that he could be of some help in Jesus' plans for the people.

Then Jesus stood before the crowd, and taking the bread and the fish in his hands told them how the little boy had brought the lunch there to eat himself, but finding that some people had nothing he was generously offering to share it with others. How fine it would be, he said, if every one who had any food would do likewise! And now something wonderful happened. When people are hungry ~~and~~ and there ~~is~~ not much food, every one who has any

usually wants to keep it all for himself. But Jesus had made these people see how fine it was to be generous, kind and thoughtful of others. The result was that, instead of thinking first of saving what he had, every one was eager to share what he had with his neighbors.

As Jesus knew would be the case there was plenty of food if all who had any shared with all who needed. So, although there seemed at first to be only the two little loaves of bread and a few dried fish, there was food left over after all had eaten. But it seemed a remarkable thing, and it was so indeed. To make a whole crowd kind and generous is something so great that it is no wonder the story of it was told far and wide until after a while it came to be said that Jesus made the little boy's lunch feed five thousand people. That, indeed, is what he did; only not by a trick of magic, but by his power over people's lives.

A very important result was that the people became very enthusiastic for Jesus. Every one was speaking about him. And so many were speaking in his praise that those who did not like him felt they must act quickly and strongly to drive him away. So it happened that they went where he went, criticised what

he said, stirred up others to find fault with him and made it plain that more and more his daily work would be one of dispute and trouble. At last Jesus felt things could not go on in that way; and he decided to leave for a time, at least, the country near the lake he loved so well.

CHAPTER XII

A BRAVE RESOLVE

IF you will look at a map of the United States you will see that for any one who lives in the northern part of our country it is not far to the line between Canada and the United States. Across that line one is in another country with a different government, different laws, and some different customs. Just so, by walking north for a few hours from the region about the lake, Jesus would come into another country where his enemies had no power and where he would not be well known. For a little while, we do not know how long, he and his young men stayed in this country. It is overshadowed by great mountains and, like Palestine to the south, it is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea.

While there Jesus cured the daughter of a woman who somehow had heard of what he had done in Galilee and believed he would help her also. But he did no public teaching,

giving all his time to his twelve young men. One day they made him very happy by telling him how much they loved and honored him. One of them, Peter, the story of whose call to give up fishing and follow Jesus you will remember, told him that they felt he was the great leader for whom every one had been watching and praying. The day this happened was a memorable day indeed for Jesus.

But it was not wise or desirable that they should go on living for a long time in this northern country. They could not do much good there just then. The great question was what to do next. An event that was soon to occur at Jerusalem finally seems to have decided Jesus' plans. This event was the Feast of the Passover. You recall the story of how the Hebrew people, long centuries before this, had been slaves in Egypt; how at last a great leader, Moses, led them out of bondage, and how every year thereafter they had a religious and patriotic ceremony or service to honor the memory of this event.

When the Passover time came, people from all over Palestine who could make the trip journeyed up to Jerusalem and stayed there for several days until on the last day of the

festival the Passover supper was served to every one in family or friendly groups, as American people eat their Thanksgiving dinner. There were thousands and thousands of visitors in Jerusalem at this time. It was the time and place of all others when one could be seen and heard by the most people.

Jesus decided to go to Jerusalem for this Passover. It was a dangerous thing to do. The Pharisees who disliked what he had done in Galilee were sure to be against his plans at this great national gathering. And at Jerusalem there were much more dreaded enemies to be met, a group of people called Sadducees. These people, holding offices in the Temple and in the city government, were certain to think that Jesus was making trouble. They would fear lest in stirring up disorder he would interfere with their plans. Perhaps indeed they would be blamed for all he did. Then they might have their offices taken from them. This would all be very disagreeable and they were determined to prevent it. Thus Jesus found them his cruel foes, ready to kill him if necessary.

And yet he decided to go to Jerusalem where all this danger lay. Why did he do

so? There were two reasons which we may name. He felt that in Jerusalem at the Passover would be the best possible chance to reach the people with his teaching. If they would listen and find the better way of life which he could point out, then and there, if ever, would be the time and place to set forth the truth. In the second place, Jesus had been growing to feel that even if he was put to death, his dying would draw people's attention to him, so that his death would really help, not prevent what he wanted to do.

What a brave resolve that was of Jesus! To go on, though he were to be killed; to teach at the cost of his life! Yet to this Jesus set his steps, willing to die if that were the result, and hopeful that his dying would do even more than his living. So we must follow him on the journey south to Jerusalem and then for a little less than a week longer in that great city — the most important week any one has ever lived on earth.

CHAPTER XIII

A LONG JOURNEY

NOW will you look again at a map of the land where Jesus lived? You will see the part marked Galilee in which were Nazareth and Capernaum and the Lake of Galilee. Almost all our story has so far been about this part of Palestine. South of Galilee you see the part marked Samaria. When David was king this was just as much a part of his kingdom as Massachusetts is a part of the United States. In the days of David's grandson, however, the kingdom was divided into two unequal parts. In Samaria was a rival capital to Jerusalem. Nevertheless the people of Samaria were of just the same race and blood as those who still held Jerusalem as their chief city. But after many years this northern kingdom was conquered by a foreign enemy and the citizens scattered. Finally in their place grew up some people called Samaritans who disliked and were disliked by the Jews living south of them.

Below Samaria on the map you see Judea, smaller than Galilee or Samaria. It is a mountainous bit of land and not so good for farming. But in Judea is Jerusalem. Here as nowhere else lived the memories of the past and the hopes for days to come. In Jerusalem were kept all the great festivals of patriotism and religion, and especially the Passover to which we are about to follow Jesus.

It is well to be clear about these things because they explain the way Jesus traveled to the feast. The easy, simple thing was to walk due south from Galilee through the midst of Samaria. But when he sent two of his young men ahead to arrange for places to stop, the Samaritan people said they did not want Jesus or any other Jews of Galilee to go through their country. Rather than have any trouble, Jesus chose another way. He followed the Jordan river, crossing over to its eastern bank and going south through a country called Perea.

It was not a very long journey. If Jesus had been inclined to hurry he could have arrived in Jerusalem within a week. But Jesus seems to have gone slowly, stopping often on the way and spending such time as seemed

worth while at one town after another. He found the people interested to hear him. They brought to him questions to be answered. Sometimes they set before him their troubles and asked Jesus what to do. Frequently Jesus replied with a story which made things very clear.

Some of the most beautiful and interesting of all his stories, or parables, seem to have been told during this journey. There is the story of the boy who asked his father to give him right away the money which might become his when, after his father's death, the property was divided. With this money he left home and spent it so foolishly that soon he did not have any left. He was so poor that he had to take the meanest, most disagreeable sort of a job, the caring for a herd of pigs. How sorry he was for the way he had wasted his money! How he wished he were once more at home! Then one day he said to himself, "I am going home. I do not know that they will let me stay. I have been so bad and foolish I do not deserve to stay. But I must see my father again."

So he started. His father had never for a moment forgotten him. The story of his bad

and silly actions had been carried to his home, but his father kept on hoping that at last he would see how foolish he was. Often this father of his looked down the road that led into the far country, wondering if the boy would come back. Then there came the day when the boy returning by that road caught sight of his father's house. He walked toward it, not knowing what to expect but ready to tell his father how very sorry he was and to ask for a chance to live and work at home as of old.

Almost at the same moment his father saw him. He did not wait for the young man to reach the house but went out to meet him. There on the roadway the boy learned that his father forgave him, and that since he was truly sorry he was to have another chance. "God," said Jesus, "is like that father. And we who are like that foolish boy are not hated because we do bad things but are waited for until we are sorry; and we are loved always."

Jesus told other stories, which you will find in the book of Luke in the New Testament, in the chapters from the eleventh to the eighteenth. Almost all that is told us there is thought to have happened on that journey through the land of Perea to Jerusalem.

CHAPTER XIV

IN JERICHO AND BETHANY

AT last Jesus and his young men reached Jericho, a very old city in the Jordan valley. In those days it was a busy place. The story of his deeds and words had gone on before him and a big crowd gathered to see Jesus. Two things happened there which were remembered ever after. One was the giving of sight to a blind man. Palestine had, and still has today, many people whose eyes are hurt by the strong sun and by lack of care. Just as Jesus helped people sick with other diseases, he helped those who had lost their sight.

The other interesting thing happened in this way. There was a man in the city whose name was Zaccheus. His business was collecting the money which people had to pay to the Roman government. We pay taxes in this way to our government, and we know that it is right and proper for the money to be collected. It is spent on our schools and roads

and police and other things we all need in our life together. The trouble in Palestine was that the money was paid over not to their own officers but to this foreign country of Rome, whose soldiers had conquered Palestine. The people felt that much of it was not spent for their good but for the Romans themselves. So they hated the men that collected the money, and Zaccheus was one of these men.

He was a short man. The crowd in the road was large and he could not catch sight of Jesus. But he was determined that he would see him. With this in mind he climbed up into a tree, and when Jesus came by there he was. Jesus felt that any man who would do that must be interested in him. He stopped and told Zaccheus that he would go to his house if Zaccheus would like to have him. Zaccheus had not been a good man. He had taken more money for the taxes than he should have, and since people hated him, he had returned their hate. But now when Jesus spoke and acted with such kindness, Zaccheus felt that he must be a decent, good man. He said to Jesus, "Just so far as I can I will give back any money I have taken

wrongly, and I will use my other money so as to do all the good I can."

This story shows us how Jesus made people feel when they really tried to understand him. Zaccheus was only one of many who, from living in a bad or foolish way, turned to be good and brave and clean in their deeds. Jesus made people want to do right and showed them how they could.

After this little visit with Zaccheus, Jesus started again on the way to Jerusalem. Jericho is in a deep valley. Jerusalem is on the top of a mountain. So this final part of Jesus' journey is a steep rocky road through wild desolate country, that very country, indeed, where John had lived and where Jesus had gone in the first days after he had decided to become a teacher about God. There is an interesting story Jesus told once about a man who was almost killed by robbers on this very road. You can read it in the tenth chapter of the Gospel of Luke.

No robbers, however, attacked Jesus on his way. He finally came to a little village about six miles away from Jerusalem, high up on the mountainside. From its streets one can look back over the long ascent and see the

Dead Sea near Jericho, far below. It was a quiet place to rest, and a safe place to stay. Jesus had some good friends there who were anxious to have him as a guest. In every way it seemed best to make his home there during the Passover.

Each morning he could walk into Jerusalem and spend the day there. Each evening he could return to Bethany, feeling sure that his enemies would not trouble him there among his friends. It was Friday when he reached Bethany. Saturday in Palestine was the day people ceased work and play and went to church. And so we think of Jesus on the last day of the week, called the Sabbath, in that little village on the mountainside.

CHAPTER XV

THE ARRIVAL IN JERUSALEM

WITH the coming of the day after the Sabbath Jesus made ready to go to Jerusalem. Accompanied by his young men he left Bethany and walked up the slope of the mountain beyond which lay the city. Nowadays, the road circles the slope somewhat below the summit. In those days the path went straight over the top, as it is not too steep for travelers on foot. But Jesus did not plan to go in that way all the distance.

Many long years before this, one of the great men of his nation had written a poem speaking of a king who should come to them "riding upon an ass." (Ass is the name for the small donkeys that are used for much of the hard work of carrying loads in Palestine.) What this writer wanted to make clear was that the true king would not come as would a soldier on a war-horse to conquer by force, but rather to win his place in a peaceful way. Jesus

felt that he was truly the one who could help the people as no one ever had done before. He believed that thus he could rightly claim to be the one who had been promised as the true leader. But he was most anxious that the people should not think of him as a general to raise armies or as a king spending great sums of money and ordering people to do his will.

In order, then, to come to them in just the way that should make plain what he wanted to do for them, he decided to enter Jerusalem as the writer of old had described. With this in mind he had made an arrangement with a man who had one of the donkeys about which I told you. Now as Jesus with his young men came near to a little cluster of houses through which the path ran, he told two of them to hurry on ahead.

"You will find," he said, "a colt tied near one of the houses. It has been put there for me. Unloose it and return at once. If anybody asks you why you are doing this, just say that the Master has need of it. Then it will be understood that you come from me, and no other question will be asked."

The two young men did as Jesus told them,

and when someone wanted to know why they were leading away the animal, the answer Jesus had told them to give explained everything satisfactorily. When they got back to Jesus and the others, they put one of their long outer garments on the donkey's back for a saddle. Jesus mounted and set forth in this way for the rest of the way to Jerusalem.

Meanwhile the news had gone ahead that Jesus was riding thither. There had come to Jerusalem as pilgrims to the Passover a considerable number of people from Galilee who had known Jesus, had heard him, had perhaps come to believe in him. At any rate he was a man of their own part of the country. Among the proud Jews of Jerusalem who thought themselves better than the Galilean people, the latter were glad of the chance to show that they too had famous men. They were ready to hail Jesus as one for their own sakes, although they might not have been loyal to him at home.

These Galileans had probably been camping out upon the mountainside, because Jerusalem could not house all the pilgrims and because it was cheaper to live in the open

air. As Jesus' little party came on towards the city the pilgrims saw him. Immediately they began to shout. Today people would cry out "Hurrah." These Galileans called out "Hosanna, Hosanna." The shouting of the first to see and greet him attracted others. In a short time there was a considerable crowd following him and surrounding him. They broke off branches of the palm trees and waved them like flags. They took off their outer garments and spread them in the path along which he rode, and their shouts rang out in the clear morning air.

So Jesus reached the summit of the Mount of Olives and began the long descent into the valley. From the top there is one of the most beautiful views in all the world. Eastward and northward and southward there are mountains and open country. But directly westward on two rocky hills, across the deep ravine into which the mountainside runs down, is the city of Jerusalem surrounded by its walls, gleaming with white and gold. One sees the whole of it at once, brilliant in the mountain air and bright sunlight. You can imagine some of the feelings it stirred in Jesus,—the beauty of it all, the sense of the city's

great past, his wonder whether it would listen to him or turn away. It would have been natural for him to have felt the danger that might be waiting there. But he did not think of going back. Instead he rode quietly but bravely forward, down the long mountain slope, through the ravine, up the shorter ascent beyond and so through the gates into the city.

CHAPTER XVI

THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED

JESUS entered Jerusalem on the first day of the week. It is impossible to tell accurately just what he did each of the first four days of the week. We have the story of certain things that happened between the Sunday morning and Thursday evening. We know, too, that every evening until Thursday Jesus walked back to Bethany and spent the night there. He did this because after a busy day among the crowds he could find more rest in the little village than in Jerusalem. But he also did it because, as he soon discovered, there was great danger to him in Jerusalem.

When the groups of people who disliked and feared Jesus saw the enthusiasm shown for him, they decided that they must do all they could to prevent him from gaining followers. Very quickly their resolve was made to put him to death. They were led to decide this with the more energy because, after reaching

the city, Jesus said certain things reproving them for the way they lived, and for their treatment of others less fortunate than they. Knowing that the people in the city were either friendly to Jesus or at least not ready to do him any harm, they did not see at first just how they could get Jesus into their power without the possibility of a riot. If they tried to make Jesus a prisoner in Jerusalem and if he called for help and received it and if all this meant a great disturbance, they knew that the Roman officer who ruled the city might punish them for causing the trouble. Instead of harming Jesus they would only hurt themselves. The question was how to catch him when no help was near.

It was just then that they received aid from one of Jesus' young men, whose name was Judas. He became a traitor to Jesus. Going to the enemies of Jesus he said that if they would pay him some money he would let them know when Jesus could be made a prisoner. Why did Judas do this? He never left any statement to explain his action. After Jesus was put to death he felt so sorry for what he had done that he took his own life. We have to try to imagine what led him to the horrible deed.

Probably he had joined Jesus expecting him to be a leader whose deeds would bring money or glory to his followers. Then when Jesus showed that no such rewards were coming, Judas felt disappointed. As the time went by and people turned away from Jesus, Judas grew bitter in his disappointment. At last seeing how in Jerusalem the richest, most powerful people were Jesus' enemies, he let himself believe that Jesus was mistaken in what he was trying to do. It would be well, so he may have said to himself, to have Jesus stopped from teaching. Judas may never have thought Jesus would be killed. But when he became a traitor to his leader and friend, he was in part to blame for all that happened later.

Meanwhile during those first four days of the week Jesus was coming to Jerusalem in the morning and speaking to various groups in the temple courts. It became clear to him right away that, although the Galilean people had given him a splendid welcome, they were not able to influence the city to accept his teaching. Instead of finding friendly listeners eager to learn what he might teach, Jesus met all sorts of people clearly bent on con-

fusing or outwitting him. They tried to engage him in disputes where they could show him forth in a bad light. Jesus always escaped their plots by his answers; but he could not change the minds or hearts of these enemies who, when defeated in words, became the more anxious to turn to force.

Even then he might have escaped, but he would not give up his work of teaching. He felt he ought to go on trying to help people understand God and treat one another kindly. So with great courage and patience and energy he did what he could among the crowds in Jerusalem by day, and each evening turned his steps to Bethany where he was sure of a friendly greeting and safe in a friendly home.

CHAPTER XVII

THURSDAY EVENING

SO the days passed until Thursday, the day when in the evening the people would gather in their family groups — or, if they were alone in the city, with other friends — and eat the Passover meal. Jesus planned to keep this custom in the company of his young men. He had arranged in advance to have a room ready. That Thursday morning he did not go into Jerusalem. His young men until then knew only that Jesus and they would keep the Passover feast somewhere together. That morning they asked him what plans he had made.

In reply Jesus told two of them to be ready to go into Jerusalem ahead of all the rest. At a certain place they would meet a man waiting for them to come. This man would carry a water jar.

“Follow him,” Jesus told them, “and he will take you to a certain house. Tell the owner of that house that you

want to know about the room which the Teacher is to have for the Passover. He will show you a large room all ready for us. Make ready the meal there."

We have seen how calmly and bravely Jesus went on his way despite all opposition shown him and all danger threatened. He did not intend, however, to be foolish. He knew that the bitter enemies in Jerusalem waited only the chance to make him prisoner, and that if they could only come upon him when he was alone with his young men, as he would be when eating the Passover supper, they could carry out their purpose. So he guarded against their knowing where he would be. He had made his plans secretly and carefully. Not until by following the man with the water jar had the two sent on ahead reached the house and the room, did any of his closest friends know the place.

There was yet a further danger to be met. It was part of the Passover custom for the Jews to remain the rest of the night in Jerusalem. So Jesus had planned that when they left the room they should go together to a quiet place on the side of the mountain, a kind of garden or grove of olive trees. This was

so near to Jerusalem that they would still be true to the custom of the Passover, but it was not a place that his enemies would think of searching. All would indeed have gone well but for one fact, the traitor in that little band which Jesus thought to be altogether loyal.

In the afternoon, with Peter and John and all the rest including Judas, Jesus set out from Bethany for Jerusalem. At once they made their way to the house where the Passover was ready. The two who had gone ahead had found everything as Jesus had planned and were awaiting him there. As the darkness fell over the city they all gathered about the table, and the ceremony of the Passover meal was begun.

Jesus, at least, felt it to be an unusually solemn hour. He knew that at any moment his enemies might be upon him in spite of all his vigilance. He had done everything he could to teach people what they should think of God and how they should treat each other. But there was much more he wanted to say. He needed more time to help people see the truth about God and one another as he saw it. And now perhaps he was to have no time. Then the question was, would these young

men who had known him best carry on his work? Would they be brave enough to face opposition as he had done and as they must do? It would be a terrible thing if all that he had tried to do should come to nothing.

Such thoughts came to Jesus. But with them came the confidence that the young men would not fail. His work would not fail. Only they must feel how much might depend on them. And so Jesus spoke to them suggesting that they might not meet together in this way again. Finally he took some of the bread from the table and keeping a piece himself he passed the rest of it to the young men saying to them, "Eat this bread tonight with me now. Then when you meet with one another again, think of how we have eaten here."

After that he took a cup of the wine which they drank instead of water at this feast, and he asked them to drink with him so that in later days in their meals together they would recall him and what he had done for them.

They did not understand all that Jesus was thinking about. Only after many days did they understand. But they felt it was a most solemn time as they joined with Jesus in

eating the bread and drinking the wine. Nor did they ever forget what he told them. Even to this day the Christian churches from time to time hold a service called "The Communion," in which they repeat the action of that long-ago night. And when people thus recall Jesus and his teaching and his brave, great life, they are helped, let us hope, to believe and to do the things he taught.

CHAPTER XVIII

JUDAS THE TRAITOR

MEANWHILE one of the young men had left the room. Judas had heard what he had waited to hear, just where Jesus was to spend the night. This was the thing the enemies of Jesus wanted to know, and they were ready to pay any one who would tell them. Through the dark streets of the city hurried this man whose name was so soon to be known for one of the worst deeds in history. It was very quiet. The busy crowds were all indoors in attendance upon the feasts. Here and there lights gleamed through the windows of rooms where the tables were set for the Passover. No one noticed him. He reached quickly the house he sought. It was that of one of the chief Jewish citizens, a priest in the Temple.

A servant at the door took his name, went away and returning a moment later led him to where the master of the house was seated.

“Well,” said the man to Judas, “have you

found out what we want to know? We are ready to pay you."

What a poor, sad business it was! But Judas had gone too far to turn back. He must go on now to complete the evil task. He did not care much for the money. He told himself again that no great harm would come to Jesus, but he would be stopped from his teaching. In his disappointment Judas wanted to bring this about.

"Yes," he said, "in an hour the Teacher and his young men will be in the Garden of Gethsemane on the side of the mountain."

The thing was done. Nothing could save Jesus now unless Judas should return and warn him. But Judas had no idea of doing this. In fact the great officer of the Temple, with whom he was speaking, intended that Judas should do something more to earn the money to be paid him.

"You will receive what I promised," he said to Judas, "but I wish you to be with the police I am sending to arrest Jesus. They may not know him, especially in the dark. Go to him and kiss him on the cheek when you see him. This will point him out. Do not fail. Now you can go."

Then he called one of his servants and told him to see to it that the men who kept order about the Temple, and others who might be collected quickly, were sent at once to the Garden of Gethsemane. There they were to find and make Jesus a prisoner and bring him to the house. It took some little time to make up this company, but finally it was done and they marched out through one of the east gates of the city, down the steep hill into the ravine where the little stream called the Brook Kedron flowed, and then a short distance up the other hillslope to where the dark mass of the olive orchard could be made out in the night.

Meanwhile the Passover celebration in the room where we left Jesus and his young men had come to its ending. They sang together a hymn as its closing act. Then silently they went out into the dark streets, through the city gate, down to the ravine, and climbing the hill they passed in among the trees. It was very late. Jesus knew that his young men were tired and sleepy, and so he told all but three of them to take what rest they could under the stars. These three,

Peter, James, John, he asked to go a little apart from the others.

"It is well," he said to them, "to keep watch. Be on your guard for a little while."

Then he himself went still farther away. He was not afraid but he felt certain that danger was close at hand. He had noted when Judas left the room. In an instant he suspected why he left. But there was nothing further he could do. He had no other friends nearby. There was no safe place anywhere in the city bounds. He was ready to meet the worst, feeling, as we have seen, that even if he were killed the work he had tried to do would not fail.

And yet all alone in the darkness how natural to feel the weight of the coming danger, pain, loss and sorrow. The power of the great city over the ravine on its hilltop was to be used against him. And he had only tried to do for the people fine and beautiful things. Do you wonder if he longed, oh, so earnestly! that he might escape, go back to the pleasant hills of Galilee, and find there safety and quiet? Yet he knew it could not be. He was determined not to retreat.

CHAPTER XIX

THE GREAT HOUR IN THE GARDEN

ANXIOUS and wakeful with the sense of the great danger that surrounded them, he walked back the few steps to where he had left the three young men keeping watch, to see if they had heard or seen anything. He found them *fast asleep*. The peril which Jesus knew was so near, they did not realize at all. Weary with the long day their eyelids had closed almost as soon as they found comfortable places to rest under the olive trees. As Jesus softly awakened them, they looked up at him with surprise and shame at having fallen asleep. "Be on your guard," he said quietly, "I know you want to help me, but your strength fails you."

Then he left them and again he went away a little distance by himself. Once more the thought of the terrible danger which threatened his life came over him. Should he run from it? The darkness would aid him. Beneath its protection he could escape over the

mountain. Before morning he would be safe at Bethany. Thence he could go back to Nazareth. No one would follow him. But if he did, if he left Jerusalem, breaking the custom of spending the Passover night in the city, if he deserted his work of teaching, men would forget not only him but what he had told them. They would say he was afraid of the priests and politicians in Jerusalem. His influence and the influence of his words would be gone forever.

All this Jesus considered and he chose to stay, no matter what happened to him, no matter what it cost him. When we think of the great moments in the history of our world, we must think of that midnight beneath the olive trees in Gethsemane. And when we think of the results that have followed these heroic decisions, we place that of Jesus, first and most important of all.

With no thought of sleep for himself, Jesus returned to his three young men. Do you suppose you would have been more faithful than they? It is easy to resolve to do something. Quite often it is exceedingly hard to carry out the resolve. Peter and James and John loved Jesus, they were anxious about

him; but they did not understand how bitter were his enemies, and they were very tired. So it was that Jesus found them again sleeping. He did not waken them this time, but once more walked away by himself under the dark branches. Then once again he returned to them, this time to waken not only the three but the other eight who were asleep not far away.

In the quiet night air Jesus had caught the sound of metal striking against stone. Listening he had heard the movement of many feet. The light of a torch, guarded but not altogether concealed, gleamed on the road up from the ravine. And then, just as he wakened his young men and they sought to collect their thoughts after their heavy sleep, the company of temple police and men picked up in the streets of Jerusalem cast all attempt at secrecy aside and noisily crowded in among the olive trees.

Foremost with the officer in charge walked Judas. And now he was to do the last terrible thing. It was necessary that Jesus should be pointed out for there was no plan to arrest any one else. Straight up to Jesus Judas walked. It was a common custom of that day and that land for one man when meeting another to kiss him on the cheek, just as two men

who meet in our country today shake hands and say, "How do you do?" In this way Judas greeted Jesus.

"Teacher, teacher," he called out and kissed him.

At once the crowd pushed forward. The officer took hold of Jesus and directed two members of the temple police to guard him carefully. For just a few moments Jesus' young men offered resistance. But they were a few against many. They were caught by surprise and unprepared. Jesus knew it would be hopeless to fight. Moreover, he did not intend to fight. He was going to try a harder way that called for more courage but would be better for his cause at last. He spoke to his young men, therefore, and told them not to offer resistance. Then he spoke to the officer of the temple police:

"Did you need to come after me with this big force of armed men? I have been in the city every day. Why did you not arrest me there?"

They had no answer. But they were strong enough to do as they intended. The officer in command gave his orders and the march back to the city began.

CHAPTER XX

JESUS A PRISONER

THE place to which Jesus was taken was the house of one of the chief men connected with the Temple, who was called the high priest. There is nobody in our life today who has a place just like that which he filled in Jerusalem. He had great power but it was limited by one thing which we must remember. The Romans had conquered Palestine with their armies and ruled the land. They left many rights to the people of Jerusalem and the officials whom they chose, but in the most important matters the governor appointed by the emperor of Rome settled what was to be done. Only he could order any one to be put to death. The governor at this time was a man by the name of Pontius Pilate.

If we remember these things we can better understand why matters happened as they did. First of all Jesus' enemies must find Jesus to be guilty of something for which he

could be put to death. Then they must go to the governor, show him what they had discovered and persuade him to give orders condemning Jesus to death. There are thus what we might call three chapters in this closing part of Jesus' life story. There is the trial before the high priest and his associates. Then there is the trial before Pontius Pilate, the governor, where the high priest presents his charge. And lastly comes the terrible carrying out of this sentence of death.

Jesus was led by his captors into a room where the high priest was seated with other important men of the city. They were all members of the group called Sadducees.

In a trial, as you may know, there must be besides the judge and the prisoner, the witnesses who tell what they know about the prisoner. In this trial of Jesus certain men had been found whose words might be used against him. But the difficulty which his enemies found was that what one witness said did not agree with what another said. Moreover, the thing which they declared Jesus said was not anything for which he could be put to death. So they had to see if they could not get him to say something

then and there which would condemn him.

At first Jesus made no answer to their questions. He knew that these men before whom he had been brought were bent on killing him. He did not know of a friend who could help him as he stood there all alone. But his courage never failed and he would not let his cruel enemies trick him. So for a while he kept a steady silence. At last, however, the high priest asked him a question which he felt he must answer.

“Are you the anointed one sent from God?”

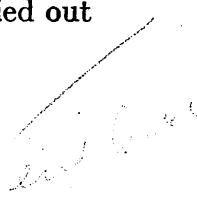
Jesus felt that God had sent him to speak His truth. And he felt also that he was really the great leader whom his people had long looked for and had expected God to send them. He had not come just as they expected. But he had come to do even greater things than they had dreamed would happen. And so it was that to this question he made reply, saying,

“I am the leader appointed by God.”

The minute he said this the high priest sprang out of his seat. He pretended to be surprised and shocked beyond all words at first. Then he cried out,

“We do not need any further word. He has condemned himself.”

Then with great excitement they all voted that Jesus had said something for which he ought to die. Probably you are surprised that this answer of Jesus could seem to any one a bad thing to say. At least, how could any one be put to death for saying it? The fact is, we must say again, these men had made up their minds to kill Jesus. They were so afraid that he would stir up some trouble which would end in hurting them that they were bent on finding any sort of excuse for carrying out their purpose. It is also true that what Jesus had said might be called by those who did not believe him as something said against their religion. According to their Jewish law any one who did this could be punished with death. Probably they knew Jesus intended to help and not to harm their religion. They knew he had done nothing to deserve death, but to kill him was the surest way to end all trouble, they thought. It was the safest way for them, and so they all cried out that he should be put to death.



CHAPTER XXI

TWO YOUNG MEN WHO FAILED

THE group with the high priest could condemn Jesus but they did not have the power to give any orders for his death. They must now take Jesus to the Roman governor. But before we follow them thither let us stop to recall two of Jesus' young men, one of whom already had been false to him, the other of whom was about to be. We will think of the latter first.

Jesus' enemies could not go to Pilate until morning. So in those hours when the night was passing but the dawn had not yet quite come, Jesus remained a prisoner in the house of the high priest. It was during this time that something happened which shows how easy it is for the bravest purpose to fail.

Some time during the early evening, when Jesus had been talking with his disciples, he had told them something of the danger he believed to be near. Peter, always quick to

speaking and acting, said boldly that although every one else should leave Jesus, he would never do so. And then Jesus, knowing how much harder was to be the experience before them than any of them knew, said to Peter,

“Before the cock crow,” (that is, before the morning comes), “you will fail me.”

When Jesus had been taken to the house of the high priest most of his young men had gone off in the darkness. Peter and John had followed at a distance. The house was built on the slope of the hill at the top of which was the Temple. There was an outer courtyard, then an inner courtyard. Around this the main part of the house was built, the rooms leading off a gallery. In the center of the court a fire of charcoal had been lighted, for the spring night was cool.

Ordinarily Peter and John would not have been permitted to enter the house. But it so happened that John knew one of the maids that admitted visitors, and with her help they gained their entrance. As they were passing in she thought she recognized Peter and said to him, “Are you also one of his young men?” Peter usually so bold, but troubled and fearful about Jesus, was caught by surprise. Almost

before he knew what he was saying he had cried out, "No, no."

The two men now came into the courtyard where the fire was burning. They drew closer to it, for they were chilled and weary. The dancing flames lighted up their faces as they stood there. One of the servants of the high priest looked up and having seen Peter somewhere with Jesus thought he recognized him.

"Are you not one of Jesus' young men?" he said. And poor Peter, held by his former lie, was guilty of another: "No," he declared.

Once more, shortly afterwards as he moved restlessly about the courtyard, yet another servant saw him and asked the question. And once more Peter denied knowing Jesus.

It was nearly dawn by this time and somewhere nearby a rooster crowed loudly. Peter heard it. At the same time looking up at the gallery around the courtyard he caught sight of Jesus as he was led along from one room to another. His proud promise and Jesus' warning came back to his mind. When he thought of it and saw Jesus alone and friendless and felt how he had been false and cowardly, he covered his head with his cloak and cried like a little child.

Was that the end for Peter? Oh, no. Peter was not false or cowardly at heart. He was only so because he had not been on his guard. Like all of us at times he thought he was braver and stronger than he really was. And he needed this terrible lesson. He learned it well. Not long afterward, as we shall see before we reach the end of the story, he showed himself the bravest of the brave.

And what about Judas, that other young man who was false to Jesus? He was guilty of a far worse fault than that of Peter. He had done his evil deed after thinking about it and planning for it. He could not give the excuse that he had not meant to harm Jesus for he knew that that was just what he had planned, even although he had not meant to cause Jesus' death. When he found out what was going to happen through his action, he would have given anything in the world to undo what he had done. But it was too late. He even tried to get the high priest to take back the money given him. The sight of it was hateful to him. But the high priest would not do this. He did not care how Judas felt. We have one last sad picture of this young man as standing in the

high priest's house before this official and some of his associates, Judas throws down the coins he cannot keep and goes out into the night. It was thought that he killed himself. Some said he did it in one way, others thought it was in a different way. We never can know what really happened. Alas for him! We can never forget what he did.



CHAPTER XXII

JESUS AND A ROMAN GOVERNOR

AS soon as it was late enough in the morning for the Roman governor to be ready to hold his court, the enemies of Jesus gave orders that their men who were guarding Jesus should lead him to the house of Pilate. The governor had never heard of Jesus and knew nothing about what had happened. When he looked at Jesus standing before him, so quiet, so unlike any criminal he had ever judged, he was greatly surprised. And he asked at once, "Of what do you accuse this man?"

They began to tell him of what Jesus had said. But Pilate was only inclined the more to favor Jesus. He did not like the Jewish people over whom he was set to keep order. He thought them a very troublesome lot, constantly quarreling over small things and objecting to what seemed to him of no account at all. He had no respect for their religion. When then they told him that Jesus

claimed to be sent from God, he was on the point of sending them away to settle their dispute by themselves and not bother him with it.

This, however, was just what the high priest and his friends did not wish to have happen, because only Pilate could order Jesus' death. And so they changed their accusation against Jesus. "He claims," they said to Pilate, "to be King of the Jews."

This was a different matter. If Jesus was trying to become king, he must have been plotting against Rome. It was Pilate's first business to check such attempts and to punish mercilessly those who took any part in them. He was obliged to consider this charge, however much he disliked the high priest and all his group, and however much he was inclined to respect and, in a careless way, to admire Jesus. And so he had to listen while they told him whatever they could think of saying to prove what a dangerous man Jesus was.

Jesus himself said nothing. He knew how useless it was to contradict their false statements, for they would declare he did not tell the truth. Pilate was surprised that he kept

silence and asked him several times if he had nothing to say. But he only shook his head and made no reply. And yet Pilate felt sure that he was not the bad, dangerous man he was said to be. Pilate knew enough of men to judge about Jesus correctly. Why then, you say, did he not set Jesus free at once? Because he was afraid to do right. He wanted to remain governor, and he feared lest word might be sent to Rome that when a rebel leader had been delivered to him as a prisoner he had not punished him. This would be regarded as a fault so great that the emperor would make another man governor in his place. Even if this did not happen there was the chance that the high priest's party could stir up much trouble in Jerusalem which he would have to stop. Perhaps many would be killed. It would seem as though he were not able to keep order in Palestine. For this he would be put out of office.

Now it so happened that just at this time the man who governed Jesus' home province of Galilee was in Jerusalem on a visit. As the priests were telling what Jesus had done they spoke of his coming from Galilee. The moment Pilate heard that, he saw a chance to

get out of the unpleasant task set for him. Jesus ought to be judged by this other ruler. It was something as though a man charged with doing wrong in Massachusetts were found to be a citizen of Ohio, and as though the governor of Ohio happening to be on a visit to Boston were asked by the governor of Massachusetts to take charge of the prisoner. Pilate at once ordered soldiers to march Jesus over to the house where the other ruler was staying.

This man, also, whose name was Herod, had never seen Jesus but he had heard of him and was curious to see him. He hoped that perhaps Jesus would do for him one of the wonderful things rumor had brought to his ears. But he was disappointed. Jesus would not try to be free by doing what was like buying Herod's favor. The priests had come along to accuse him in this new court. After a while, angry at Jesus' refusal to speak, Herod's followers put on him a cloak of the colors kings wore. Then they made fun of him. Finally, not wanting the trouble of settling the matter, Herod sent him back to the Roman governor.

There was just one other thing Pilate could

do. He had remembered that every Passover time it was a custom for the governor to set free some prisoner. It so happened that there was in the prison just then a man who had been a highway robber and who had also tried to stir up a revolution. He had been caught and sentenced to die. Between this man, whose name was Barabbas, and Jesus, Pilate thought there would be no question if he were to offer to set one or the other free.

CHAPTER XXIII

JESUS OR BARABBAS?

YOU must understand that what had so far occurred had taken place within Pilate's house. But while the time was passing a large crowd had gathered together outside. Jesus had attracted enough attention by what he had been saying in the Temple courts during the week to make the news of his arrest an interesting story. One by one or by small groups many people had been drawn together. There were great numbers of pilgrims who had little to do and were ready for any excitement. There were also the usual number of idle people in Jerusalem who, having no regular business, welcomed anything that promised to amuse them. With these there were doubtless a few who were Jesus' real friends and were greatly troubled at the danger threatening him. But to far the larger number Jesus seemed just a man from up in the north country, who had come down to Jerusalem to the Passover

Feast, had talked and acted foolishly, and had thereby gotten into trouble. If in a crowd of such people, who know little about what is going on, there are a few shrewd men who act as leaders, these few can stir up much excitement; and the crowd can be led to do what no member of it would do by himself.

As soon as they saw the people collecting that morning, the enemies of Jesus had made it a point to start stories about him and to give out the impression that a very dangerous man was on trial before Pilate. As time went by the people got more and more impatient and it was increasingly easy to get them to do what their leaders wanted them to do. As soon as the priests heard Pilate's offer, they at once sent out the word through the crowd that they should shout for Barabbas. It is possible that some number of them may have known Barabbas, and were all ready to hurrah for him as a man that had tried to start trouble for the hated Romans.

The choice between Jesus and Barabbas was to be made by the people. Such was the custom. In order, therefore, to carry out the plan he had in mind, Pilate brought Jesus out upon a little balcony overlooking the

street. Then speaking in a loud voice he said:

“You have a custom at this feast that I shall grant a pardon to some one charged with wrong-doing against the government. You have brought here this man Jesus. Sometime ago Barabbas was arrested and condemned as a rebel. Today I will free one of these men. Which shall it be?”

And then it was that the crowd led by the agents of the priests shouted out loudly, “Barabbas, Barabbas!”

Pilate was silent for a moment. He had counted on settling this disagreeable business by his clever plan. He was so sure that Jesus was innocent of any serious wrong-doing that he simply did not even then realize how vindictive was the spirit of the priests. We can catch his astonishment in the question that broke from him,

“What then do you wish to do with this man who, you say, claims to be your king?”

The priests had made the crowd ready for just such a chance as this. Their shout went up, “Crucify him, crucify him.”

Thus was the question forced on Pilate. Now was the time for him to show courage as Jesus had done. How different would have

been his story if he had only stood by what he knew to be right! But he miserably failed. He gave in to the priests. Although he despised them he would not oppose them. He gave the order that Jesus should first be scourged and then be crucified.

CHAPTER XXIV

JESUS AND THE CROSS

IT is a sad, terrible story that follows but we must now think about it. Scourging meant being beaten on the back with a terrible sort of whip to the cords of which were fastened pieces of metal that tore the flesh. Soldiers took Jesus to their guardhouse, stripped off his upper garments, tied him to a pillar in the courtyard, and one of their number struck him again and again. Then over his bleeding back they threw once more the robe which Herod had caused him to wear to make fun of him. These rough men did not hate Jesus. He was just a prisoner they could treat any way they wished. Because they had become naturally cruel through their life as soldiers, it was good sport for them to cause Jesus all the pain they could. They had heard that he was going to be put to death because he had claimed to be a king. Some one of them had a small branch of a tree with long, sharp thorns growing from it. They took this,

brought the ends together, and pressed it down on Jesus' head to look like a crown. Another one of them took a branch of a palm tree and thrust it into Jesus' hand as if it were a scepter. Then they crowded about him, striking him roughly and shouting to him to name the one who had given the blow.

Deserted by all his friends, alone in the hands of these brutal soldiers, Jesus suffered the pain of the scourging and the mockery that followed with the steadiest bravery. He had had only the desire to help people live better and happier lives. For doing this it now seemed that all the world was turned against him. His heart might well have been broken by what had happened. You could not blame him if he had lost courage in the face of his all-powerful enemies. He had had no sleep or rest since Wednesday night. It was now nearly noon of Friday. Yet almost overcome by the pain of the scourging, weary, despairing of any help from his friends, he faced his enemies with dauntless spirit.

And now tiring of the savage play they had been carrying on, the Roman soldiers made ready to carry out the governor's orders to put Jesus to death by crucifying him. This was a

form of death long since given up as too cruel. A heavy piece of timber was nailed crosswise to another yet heavier and longer piece. Then the condemned man was held down, his arms were stretched out along the crosspiece, through his hands were driven great spikes, and his feet were nailed to the upright beam in the same fearful fashion. The cross was then set down into a hole prepared for it. There it stood with its victim until he died.

The cross on which Jesus was to die had been made ready. It was part of the custom in putting a man to death to compel him to carry to the place of execution the cross on which he was to die. This was a low hill just outside the walls. A guard of soldiers was formed. Jesus was ordered to lift the cross upon his shoulders and the procession started towards the gate of the city. Such of the crowd as had lingered around the guardhouse where the scourging took place followed after them. So weak had Jesus become as a result of the way he had been treated that he fell beneath the weight of the cross, and it was impossible for him to go on. Seeing this the officer in charge of the soldiers ordered one of them to seize some man in the crowd and make

him bear the cross. The order was carried out. A man by the name of Simon who had come in from a near-by village to spend the day in Jerusalem was dragged up to where Jesus had fallen and made to lift up the cross. Then once again they moved on, through the Damascus Gate of the city to the hill.

Two other men who had been condemned to death were to be crucified with Jesus. One after the other each was nailed to his cross, which with its terrible load was then set into the ground. That of Jesus was the middle one of the three. His clothes, which had been stripped from him, were divided among the soldiers. Far on the outskirts of the crowd were certain women who had believed in him. His mother also had followed to the place. His young men, horrified, frightened and in despair, had gone out of the city or were in hiding there. The sun beat down on Jesus and his two companions on the cross. It was a terrible hour.

CHAPTER XXV

THE DEATH OF JESUS

ALTHOUGH the pain from the crucifixion was fearful, it usually happened that the poor victim of it lived some time, dying at last from exhaustion. But Jesus lived only a few hours after being nailed to the cross. He had suffered much from the cruelty of the soldiers. This, however, does not altogether explain his early release from the pain. He had been spending his whole strength so tirelessly in the work he had sought to do that when it all seemed to end in the triumph of his enemies, the thought broke down his will to live and after three hours he was dead.

But in those three hours some things happened which were never to be forgotten. The two robbers crucified with Jesus were rough men who had lived hard lives. One of them died as he had lived, railing at those who punished him and at Jesus.

“If you are God’s appointed one,” he cried, “why don’t you save yourself and us?”

And when Jesus made no reply he broke out against him with oaths.

But the other robber was deeply moved by Jesus' calm, quiet courage. He felt that Jesus was indeed a great and good man.

"Be quiet," he cried out. "Will you not be decent before you die? Can't you tell that this man is not like us? We get what we deserve, but he has done nothing wrong."

And then turning to Jesus he spoke to him with respect and great longing: "Master, do not forget me when you are happy in the other world."

Jesus had been silent when men had been cruel, harsh and false to him. But now when a man cried out to him for help, he did not think of his own suffering.

"Today," he said, "whatever good comes to me I will share with you."

A few soldiers lingered near to see that no one came to rescue the dying men. Curiosity-seekers from the city walked out to the hill and looked at the crosses and especially at that where Jesus hung. Most of these people were careless and indifferent. Some of the priests were there, gloating over the fact that they had gotten out of the way the young

man who would have turned people against them and lessened their power.

"He claimed to help people," they said with a sneer, "let him get out of his own trouble now."



As the weary minutes passed Jesus' spirits sank beneath the awful burden of his pain.

"Oh God," he murmured once, "why have you left me?"

But then even as he grew weaker and weaker he felt sure God had not forgotten him, and at last just before he died he spoke again:

"Father, into thy hands I give myself."

There was a Roman officer who had been

left in charge of the soldiers and who had seen how patiently Jesus had borne the pain, how steadily he had faced death, how heroically he had died. Now that he saw Jesus was dead, he could not keep back an expression of perfect respect, and he said to those standing nearby, "He was certainly a good man."

The next day was the rest day, the Sabbath, as it was called. No work of any sort could be done. The whole business of the crucifixion must be finished before dark.

The Roman soldiers would be glad enough to hurry matters for their own sake if not to please the Jews. Jesus having died, the death of the two robbers was hastened. Then came the question of what to do with the bodies. Of what happened to those of the robbers we do not know, but for that of Jesus an unexpected friend came forward. This new friend was a member of one of the wealthy families of Jerusalem. He was connected in an official way with the very group of priests who had brought about Jesus' death. But he had for a long time admired Jesus and felt he was teaching what was true. He had not come

out openly as his friend before this. Now, however, he came to the help of Jesus' friends, the good women who had followed even to the hill of crucifixion. But for him they would have been powerless to have cared for the poor broken body of Jesus.

Just at the very foot of the hill was a little garden. The hill was bare, bleak, forbidding, but the garden was green and restful, a little place of peace so near to one of brutal death. It belonged to this man whose name was Joseph. Out of a ledge of rock which bounded the garden on one side had been cut a tomb. It had never been used, but was all ready for a body to be placed within it. To save all trouble, Joseph went to the governor to ask if he might bury the body of Jesus, and Pilate said that he might. Then Joseph and the good women had Jesus' body carried down into the garden. They washed away the blood of the wounds, cared for it as they knew how to do, and then as the evening shadows were falling over the little garden they laid it tenderly within the tomb. Across the entrance was set a heavy piece of stone, and as night came over the city they went to their homes.

CHAPTER XXVI

AFTERWARDS

YOU would naturally think that we had now reached the end of the story.

The brave young man with his wonderful teaching about God and the way we should act towards one another has been put to death. Enemies who hated him for the very good he did have defeated his plans. Surely his memory will be tenderly kept by those who loved him. The words he spoke will not be forgotten, nor the deeds he did. But his followers are few. They have no power. They are much discouraged and they are broken-hearted. It cannot be that they will gather together soon or that they will have much influence when they do.

This is what you would expect to be true. But this is not what happened. Something occurred that changed all this. Within a not very long time these young men who had followed Jesus are talking about him in the Temple and on the streets of Jerusalem.

They are calling people to become his followers. They are going out through Palestine with his story. And hundreds of people are listening and saying, "We would like to be his followers."

Then the same group that caused Jesus' death begins to arrest and punish those who become known as believers in him. Some are put in prison, others are put to death. But all this only sends the story abroad faster and farther. More and more people become his followers.

From Palestine to other lands in Asia, from Asia across the sea to Greece, from Greece to Rome, the story goes. The followers increase in spite of opposition and violence. Then comes victory over all who oppose. Years pass, centuries pass. Still the story is told, still the number of followers grows. From Rome through Europe, then across the Atlantic with our ancestors goes this story.

Finally the movement turns back to the East, to lands where it is not known, China, Japan, India and far-away islands in distant seas. So it continues today. Still we read his story and as the finest thing possible for

us, we try to do the things he said. What brought all this to pass?

The answer can be given briefly. The friends of Jesus came to believe he was not dead but living again. They had laid the poor body in the tomb, but Jesus, the loving great spirit they had known, seemed to them to be alive. How did they know it? That is harder to say. Those who came to know this, the women who had been so loyal, Peter who had failed but was after all so loyal — these and others did somehow become sure that Jesus had made himself known to them. They said one to another, "He is alive."

They tried to tell how they knew it, but the thing was so great and wonderful they could not describe it. They spoke of angels coming to them, but we know that angels are not real beings. We speak of them to describe influences we do not quite understand. Some said one thing, others said another. Their reports did not quite agree. This always happens when people try to tell of a wonderful thing they do not altogether understand. But on one thing they did agree. One thing was sure although they might be puzzled to explain everything connected with it: Jesus was alive.

Because of that they grew brave and confident. They came together. They told his story. They were ready to die for him. Some did. All lived for him. And his story was told. The Christian religion spread.

This little book is not to tell you the story of Christianity. Some day you will study it. We will not do so now. But let me tell you of one other thing that happened.

Jesus had spoken of what God was like. People hearing about Jesus began to say, "He acts as God would if he were on earth as a man. If we want to know what God is like, we can think of Jesus."

This was a wonderful thing. No one has seen God. We believe that he is an all-great, all-wise, all-kind power. But how vague that is. Perhaps although you know what all those words mean that sentence does not mean much to you. It is hard to think what God is like until we say "He is like Jesus." No one who ever lived has so clearly helped us to know God. Jesus tells us what God is like as the sunshine falling on my desk tells us what the sun is, or the water that I see if I stand on the sandy shore tells me of the ocean.

Do you see, then, what a wonderful thing

Jesus did for the world? At different times great men have made discoveries which have changed our way of thinking and acting. You will recall some of these. There was the man who found a way to print with movable types and so enabled men to have books. There was another man who thought of the steam locomotive, and yet another of the steamboat. Then there were the men who made the automobile and telephone and radio possible. All such were great men.

And yet wonderful as these things are, the people who use them may be just as mean and selfish and thoughtless as those who lived before any of them were discovered. What is needed most of all and all the time is that we should be able to get the better of our bad tempers, our foolish desires and our unkind thoughts. Here is where Jesus was great and so was greatest of all. By what he discovered about God he helps us more than anyone else to have better and nobler characters. For he shows us most of God and God's care for us. Then because God is our Father, we who are his children are brothers and sisters to each other. And this gives us knowledge of the way to live day by day.

Jesus made the greatest of all discoveries. He taught the most useful of all truths. He gave us the secret of the most difficult thing in the world. So men have loved and revered him. So he calls us all to follow him in his thought of God and his way of treating other people.



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